

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

12TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN REPUBLIC

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Armenian Republic on the nation's Twelfth Anniversary of Independence. Today, citizens of Armenia, as well as people of Armenian descent here in the United States and around the world celebrate their independence from the former Soviet Union.

Since its independence, nations have welcomed Armenia into the international. I am proud that this Congress has consistently voted to provide humanitarian economic development assistance to help Armenia transition to the development of civil society and to continue its transition to a free market economy.

The United States has a fundamental national interest in bringing about stability in the strategically located Caucasus region and in supporting those emerging nations like Armenia that share our values. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that the tensions in the region subside and that the long-standing differences that divide the countries of the region are resolved. Winners and losers in the Caucasus will only foster greater insecurity and instability at a time when we need to bring everyone together to combat terrorism. I have been encouraged by Armenia's ongoing attempts to reach out to its neighbors—Turkey and Azerbaijan—in a constructive manner.

Mr. Speaker, the story of the Armenian people is an unforgettable story of triumph over adversity and tragedy. Earlier in this century, in one of history's most horrible crimes against humanity, 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children were slaughtered by the Ottoman Turkish Empire. We must continue to remind the world that this genocide is an historic fact—despite the efforts of so-called “revisionists,” many of them funded by the Turkish government, to deny the truth—and to make sure that our Nation, the world community, and especially the Turkish nation come to terms with and appropriately commemorate this historic fact.

Mr. Speaker, it was the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 that allowed the Armenian people to re-establish a state and a nation, to create a society where their language, culture, religion and other institutions would prosper. The people of Armenia have endeavored to build a free and proud nation, based on the principles of democracy and a market economy.

The tiny, landlocked Republic of Armenia is surrounded by hostile neighbors, who have imposed blockades halting the delivery of basic necessities and greatly hindering economic development. Despite the dual blockades, Armenia continues to implement economic and democratic reforms. During the first 6 months of this year, Armenia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) increased by 12.5 percent in 2002. And during the last year, both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have publicly noted Armenia's economic progress.

Despite this progress, I would like to say that the economic reality of daily life for the people of the Republic of Armenia continues to be extremely hard.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that as we mark future Independence Days of the Republic of Armenia, we can look back with pride on building peace and prosperity in the entire Trans-Caucasus region, so that the people of Armenia and their neighbors can enjoy a stable and hopeful future. I hope that the Republics of Turkey and Azerbaijan will respond positively to Armenia's repeated offers to normalize relations. Specifically, I hope that Turkey will allow for the exchange of diplomats and allow the free flow of goods and people across the borders. And I hope that, with the active participation of the United States, we will resolve the Nagorno Karabagh conflict, in a manner that guarantees the security and self-determination of the people of Karabagh.

Finally, I wish the Armenian people well on the occasion of their independence day, and, more important, in their ongoing effort to establish good relations with its neighbors and build a vibrant democracy so that their children may prosper in the homeland of their ancestors.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE EMERSON FAMILY

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before this body of Congress to recognize an outstanding family from my district. The Emerson family of Grand Junction, Colorado has been a fixture of their community for many years. The Emersons have shown their devotion to their community by promoting local products and services at their family run Quality Meat Market. I am honored to share their story here today.

The Emersons have owned the Quality Meat Market since 1946, insisting from the beginning that an emphasis be placed on local goods. The Emersons' support has allowed many of Western Colorado's farmers and ranchers to remain in business through the years. The Emersons feature a variety of local products, from meat and jams to coffee and soap. They have devoted themselves and their store to serving the needs and the desires of their community.

Mr. Speaker, the Emerson family saw a need in their community and they addressed it. The Emersons established a place for local farmers and ranchers to market their goods and services to the community. The Emersons' deep commitment to their community exemplifies the spirit that makes this country great. I am honored to join with my colleagues today in thanking the Emersons and wishing them good luck in the years ahead.

POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2003

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is National POW/MIA recognition day. This annual day of recognition honors those brave soldiers who served valiantly to protect our liberties but remain unaccounted for. America remains vigilant in its effort to see each one of these nearly 93,000 brave soldiers are identified, accounted for, and returned to their families. Recently, I met with representatives from the Department of Defense Prisoner of War—Missing Personnel office and was pleased to learn of their steadfast dedication to see to it that each one of these POW/MIA cases are resolved.

America owes an enormous debt of gratitude to those who have answered to the call to defend our freedoms and there is no better way to honor that debt than to remain committed to bringing closure to the suffering for each of their families. We will never forget the sacrifices that thousands of American soldiers have made throughout the world in the name of liberty and freedom, and we must do everything we can to help bring the POW/MIA soldiers home.

I display the POW/MIA flag outside my office as a constant reminder to those who visit, that there are heroes who have not yet made it home. I encourage my colleagues to join me in honoring these brave soldiers by renewing our resolve to close these cases and end the suffering caused by the uncertainty of their fate.

RECOGNIZING EL PASO'S RIO GRANDE CHILI WAR FESTIVAL

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2003

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to a “hot topic”—the Rio Grande Chili War Festival, taking place September 20 and 21, 2003, on the Yselta del Sur Pueblo reservation in my congressional district.

The Festival will feature a variety of local foods, including Mission Valley Long Green chilies, a chuck wagon cook-off, live entertainment, Native American dancers, and games. Most importantly, the event will establish once and for all that the best chilis anywhere in the Southwest are grown in El Paso.

You see, Mr. Speaker, some of my good friends and colleagues from New Mexico and Arizona might be under the misimpression that their communities have our nation's greatest chilies, or best chili festival. While I am sure they are very good, El Pasoans know that those bragging rights belong to us!

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I commend everyone involved with the Rio Grande Chili War Festival—the best chili festival in America—and wish them every success with the event.

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